754 magic would have worked against him. He was said not to have been bothered after this, but he warned Agustín in our presence against giving a coin to a stranger who seemed very friendly, as he might merely be wishing for sweat to bewitch him.

The reason Agustín's father could deal with witches so effectively was that he had been immunized against witches. A friendly witch had wrapped him from head to foot in string soaked in snake oil and other things. He wore the string for 2 days and then was told not to bathe for another week. Agustín knew no other details, but shortly before the study closed he admitted that immediately after his arrival in Cherán the family had hired a witch to immunize him. Beyond stating that it was only a temporary and simple immunization, Agustín would give no further details. Ultimately, it was intended that he have the more complete treatment.

The fact that the Rangel family left Cherán after the alleged bewitchment mentioned above and had the son immunized immediately after their return lends support to the belief that the family left town because of witchcraft.

754 Data are too scanty to form any reliable
157 hypothesis about the effects of witchcraft in
621 Cherán. Nevertheless, an attractive theory might be developed that witchcraft accounts for some of the personality traits in Cherán and more particularly for the prevalence of walled yards and the general unwillingness to invite strangers or little-known persons inside the yard gate. It should not be overlooked, though, that the exclusive character of the Cherán family or household grouping may also be accounted for in terms of the more urban character of the settlement.

754 Two other items should be added to this discussion. It was reported that some witches had a white powder which they threw into people's faces. The powder instantly disappears inside and the persons become ill. Good witches may cure this sickness.

791 Although not considered witches, there are women who tell fortunes with cards. One woman in *barrio* III is said to be able to tell where lost cattle are and, if they have been stolen, who the thief is.

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668 agrarista groups to identify the cult and
794 the festivals with the land order against
798 which they were revolting. Thus the local situation tied itself up with the national anticlerical policy of the government.

The agraristas kept the priest out of town and closed the church. If it had been burned during the Revolution they did not rebuild it,[52] or they used the church and the priest's house for other functions such as social centers or schools.[53] Cargos and fiestas were forbidden as they were seen to be the causes of excessive expenditures and drunkenness.[54]

We have already presented the causes for the failure of the agraristas to maintain their power in villages where small land-
[565] owners prevailed. The agraristas became an exclusive privileged minority, opposed to the interest of most of the villagers. Their anticlerical policies also led them to reforms in an aspect of culture—religion and festivals—which were deeply ingrained in the traditional culture. Resistance to their economic policies thus became associated with resistance to culture change. In such conservative villages, reaction against the agraristas was always prevalent,[55] and it had a militant Catholic ideology. Even during the period of the most strongly antichurch policy of the government, some villagers managed to hide a priest,[56] and others, like Cherán, smuggled one in to say mass in private houses without the anticlerical minority's being strong enough to dare speak.[57]

791 Still in other more conservative villages the lack of a priest led not to obsolescence of religion, but to manifestations of folk religion which the priests would not have allowed. In Ocumicho, a woman called María Doncella (Mary the Maiden) claimed to have heard the voice of God in a slit stone in a ravine near the village. The news spread throughout the region and many people began to come to Ocumicho in pilgrimage. María Doncella baptized the children herself and songs were made to her in which she was called the daughter of God. Once she said that the Virgin of Cocucho had come to Ocumicho and taken the patron San Pedro with her, and she organized a procession of people to go to Cocucho and pray to have San Pedro come back. According to skeptical informants

52. Uruapicho: Beals, 1946, 131.
53. Tzurumútaro, Puácuaro.
54. Sáenz, 1936, 96; Simpson, 1937, 467.
55. Sáenz, 1936, passim; Foster, 1948, 175.
56. Tzintzuntzan: Foster, 1948, 175, 234.
57. Beals, 1946, 119.

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791 from Cocucho, her reputation and activities evaporated when in spite of her name she became pregnant.

668 Also, during this time of the government's limitation of priests, groups of
794 *cristeros*, in revolt against the government, operated in Michoacan.[58]

178 From about 1940, the agraristas lost control of many villages. They were able to stay in power only where they had been the majority. No study has been made of towns where the agraristas predominated. The communities studied are conservative and the agraristas were a minority. The study of Cherán[59] was made shortly after the agrarista group had been expelled. The author's field work was concentrated in a village where the anti-agrarista reaction was in power and had become affiliated with sinarquismo.

In describing the present economic situation we mentioned how the economic decline of the Indian communities is continuing in modern times. Since this economic decline was the cause for conflict in the sphere of the cult, the question naturally arises about the policy of this strongly religious reaction in regard to the old cargo system.

Following the success of the anti-agrarista reaction, the cult has again been allowed in villages where it had been forbidden, and fiestas are celebrated again, but there is no blooming again of the traditional cabildo; the decay of the old cargo system continues. Within the Catholic reaction to the agraristas we can see differences arising between more traditional and more modern elements; these differences are manifest in connection with religion and cargos.

Through the changes taking place in the political-religious organization, the cabildo became independent of the village civil administration, and, although connected with the priest, it arranged the festivals and the concession of sponsorships independently. As the organizer of the folk cult activities, it can be taken as the organization most purely representing the folk aspects of the local culture. It is in a position to resist national inroads on the folk culture either from the priest, who wants to change the festivals, or from the government, which wants to suppress the religious cult. As long as the elders have any political power within the community,

58. Foster, 1948, 178.
59. Beals, 1946.